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**MACEDONIA  
AND  
THE MACEDONIAN  
POPULATION.**



ALLEGRA

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# MACEDONIA

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IT is well known from history that the Balkan Peninsula was through centuries the theatre of the struggle of the newly arrived nations, who either moved across it further on, or settled on its territories. But not one of the conquerors has succeeded to create one unit out of the nations of this Peninsula, as its oreographic construction made a great obstacle to such an unification.

When in the middle of the XIVth century the Turks for the first time crossed over to Europe, they found in the Balkan Peninsula three empires—the entirely exhausted Byzantine Empire, weak and dependent Bulgaria, and the powerful Serb Empire. The centre of the Serb Empire was then not Serbia as she was before the war of 1912, but the Old Serbia and Northern Macedonia, with Skoplyé (Uskub) as the capital town.

Having taken firm footing in the Balkan Peninsula, the Turks have gradually extended their rule over it, and even further outside its boundaries. For more than four centuries the greater part of the territories of that Peninsula belonged to the Turkish Empire, and the nations, living on those territories, after stubborn and desperate struggles, succumbed under their power.

But although all those nations during the whole time of the Turkish domination were simply Turkish "Rayah," mass of people without any rights, and although they were constantly and in all sorts of manners oppressed, still the great majority of them succeeded in preserving their distinctive national features: their religion, language, national customs, etc. And when in the beginning of the XIXth century the Turkish power began to decay, when some of the Balkan nations rose up to liberate themselves from the Turkish direct government, then the national consciousness of the nations, up to then subjugated, commenced strongly to awake, each group naturally aspiring to be united with their natural elements.

That tendency is permanent and indomitable. It has created in the Balkan Peninsula the questions of Nationalities, of which one of the most important ones is exactly *The Macedonian Question*. That question is still on the *Order of the day*, inasmuch as the Bulgars continue to make efforts, although without any right or reason, to prove to the world, that the population of Macedonia is of the Bulgar origin.

To throw more and true light on that question, we will here state, although in the shortest sketch, certain historical un-doubted facts, which will clearly prove how entirely groundless is the Bulgarian assertion that the Macedonian population is of the Bulgar origin.

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When the Slavs arrived in the Balkan Peninsula, they have settled also in Macedonia. The Macedonian Slavs are therefore a part of the Southern Slavs. But besides the general name of Slavs the specific name of the Serbs is early enough mentioned in Macedonia. The Byzantine Emperor, Constantine Porphyrogenete, wrote about the 950th year, that the town Srbitsa, in the Salonica district along the river Bistritsa at the foot of Olympus, got its name from the Serbs who lived there. That town is known to-day under the Turkish name Serfidjé.

The Serbs came to the Balkan Peninsula already in the first half of the VIIth century. The Serbs, like other Slavs of the Peninsula, were of the Indo-European race. Towards the end of the seventh century a Mongol tribe, called Bulgars, invaded the territory between the Danube and the Balkan, and subjugated the Slavs who lived there. Being of quite a different race, speaking quite different language, the Bulgars' culture was quite different from that which the Balkan Slavs possessed. The Southern Slavs, conquered by the Bulgars, did not like their conquerors. Their hatred was quite intelligible, seeing that their masters were oppressors, men of different race, language and culture. But notwithstanding all those differences and hatred, the relations became gradually more intimate, mutually influencing each other, accommodating themselves to each other, until at last they have melted into one nation. The old Turanian name of the conquerors, Bulgars, was retained as a common name of this mixed Turanian-Slav nation.

The invaders, who arrived as Nomads, gradually settled down and became agricultural people like the Slavs were. Being in minority by their numbers they were obliged to accommodate themselves to the Slav race. Their language was gradually disappearing until it was entirely replaced by the Slav language. This process of assimilation of the Turanian invaders by the Slavs took about 250 years until it was accomplished. Accordingly the Slav language, which the Bulgars adopted from the conquered Slavs, is the only circumstance which allows them to consider themselves as belonging to the Slav group of nations. Otherwise there would be no place for them in that group.

Therefore it is perfectly clear that the Macedonian Slavs, Serbs, are something quite different than the Slavonised Bulgars.

Let us now proceed further.

The territory on which the process of creation of the Bulgar nation was accomplished is exactly that one which the Bulgars have occupied on their arrival on

the Balkan Peninsula. It does not stretch towards the West further of the river Iskra in the contemporary Bulgaria. Nor it did stretch towards the South further than to the Balkan mountain. Up to the year 800 the Bulgarian State's boundary on the West was formed by Iskra, and till 861 year it did not go further southwards than up to the Balkan mountain. The difference between the Bulgars, within the boundaries which we just indicated, and the Slavs outside those boundaries, has been very early pointed out by the Byzantine writers. They call "Slovenia" all the South-Slav territory from the Adriatic Sea to the Mountain of Rhodope, to distinguish it from Bulgaria, and the people living in that territory they call "Slovens," to distinguish them from the Bulgars. Even in our days the Bulgarian nation, living within those boundaries, is by all its features quite distinct from all other South Slavs.



When the Tsar of the Bulgars, Assen II., attacked suddenly and defeated the Despot of Epirus, Theodor Komnene, he became the master of all the territories from Adrianople up to Durazzo, including Skoplyé and Ochrida. Out of gratitude for that victory Assen built in his capital, Trnovo, the Church of 40 Martyrs. In an inscription in that church he describes how he made Despot Theodor his prisoner, and how he had subjugated *all the countries, Greek, Albanian and Serb.*" But that Bulgar reign in Macedonia lasted altogether only sixteen years.

The war between the Serbian King Stephen Dechanski on one side, and the allied Byzantines, under Andronic III. and Bulgars, under their king Michael Shishman, and the victory of Dechanski in the battle of Velboozde (to-day's Kiustendil) on 26 July, 1330, were of immense importance for the solution of the question of the supremacy of the Serbs over Bulgars during the entire middle age, and for the destiny of Macedonia as well.

When in the year 1346 the Serbian Archbishop was proclaimed in Macedonia the Patriarch of the Serbs and Greeks of the Serb State, the Bulgars not only had made no protest, but that proclamation was made with the consent of the Bulgarian Patriarch in Trnovo.

Further, the Bulgars have not protested when, immediately after that, the Serbian King Dooshan was crowned in Macedonia as the Tsar of the Serbs, while the Byzantines and the Greeks have made their protests. All that Bulgaria did consciously, considering Macedonia as Serbian country.

The Turks have conquered Macedonia after the battle on Maritsa (1371) from the Serbs as a Serb country. In all the monuments and chronicles, Serb and foreign ones, it is reported that in the battle on Maritsa the Serb army was defeated, and that in that battle the Serb King Vookashin, and some other Serb dynasts, perished.

But even that fateful battle has not destroyed the Serb reign in Macedonia, and in that country the Serb influence continued to be paramount all up to the death of Sultana Mara (1487), the daughter of the Serbia's ruler George Brankovich.

The national consciousness of the Macedonian Serbs has been kept alive during the whole time of the Turkish reign.

Whenever since the middle of the XVIIth century Austria attacked the Turks, Serbs from all Serb countries flocked into the Anstrian army as volunteers to help to liberate the Serb countries from the Turkish yoke.

Prince Eugen of Savoy, having won the decisive victory over the Turks at Zenta in the year 1697, gives public and warm praise to the Serb volunteers, who have helped essentially to win that fateful victory. The Serbs fought under the command of their own commander, Voyvode John Monasterly, whose very name shows that he was a Serb of Macedonia, and who also later was something like a political leader of the Serbs in Hungary.

When in 1788 Austria declared war to Turkey, Serbs from all Serb territories went as volunteers to join the Austrian army to fight for the liberation of Serbia. That army had on that occasion nine officers, born Serbs of Macedonia, besides other men from that country.

When in the beginning of the XIXth century Serbia started her own struggle for liberation, there was not a corner of the Serb territories from which Serb volunteers did not hurry to help their brethren. Some of the Macedonian Serbs occupy prominent places in the history of Serbia's liberation. Whole Macedonia participated by her soul in that liberation, and it could be justly said that the great number of the Serbs of Macedonia took part in the creation of the free Serbia.

It is true that the Bulgars in the middle ages reigned in Macedonia for a short time. But they took that country by the force of arms, without any other right. As the Bulgars at that time were only by half the Slavs and by half the Mongols, could they have the power to assimilate the purely Slav element which then lived in Macedonia? Evidently not!

And then where is that right on which the Bulgars lean when pretending that the Macedonian population is of the Bulgar origin, and that therefore Macedonia ought to belong to them?

Liberated principally by the Russian help and co-operation of the Serbian nation and its army, the Bulgars have since the San Stefano Treaty (1878) contracted Megalomania and the desire for hegemony in the Balkan Peninsula. As it is well known that Treaty let Macedonia, large portion of the Old Serbia, and even some parts of present Serbia, enter into composition of Bulgaria. According to that Treaty Bulgaria was to comprise a territory of 164,000 square kilometres with 4½ million inhabitants.

The motives, from which General Ignyatiyeff attached Macedonia to Bulgaria, were by no means of ethnographic nature; they were simply the motives of the autocratic Russia's imperialistic policy.

Although the Berlin Congress of 1878 had reduced the extent of the San Stefano Bulgaria, the Bulgars commenced since that time to claim Macedonia as rightly belonging to them, and to dream only of Great Bulgaria as drawn up in the San Stefano Treaty. For some time the Russians encouraged them in that attitude. Those Russian sympathies for the Bulgarians were spread in other countries too, and there are people who in consequence believe that after all the Bulgars must have had some right on Macedonia.

In the study of this question it is important to remember a fact. After the Serbs in the beginning of the XIXth century have succeeded to liberate a part of their country by an open and through years sustained revolution against the Turks, the Serb people remaining under the direct rule of Turkey were bitterly persecuted, hated and cruelly maltreated by the Turks. No Serb was sure of his life or his property. A man ran all sorts of risks if he were to call himself a Serb before the Turkish authorities or before the Turks, because the name "Serb" was a synonyme for a revolutionary and an enemy of the Turks. At the same time the name "Bulgar" became the synonyme of a quiet, loyal and obedient "rayah." Therefore it is not astonishing that many a Serb of Macedonia, to protect himself against the persecution, answered the question "to what nationality you belong?" by saying that he is a Bulgar. That was often the only means to save his own life and property, or the life of his family. This difficult position of the Serbs in Macedonia the Bulgars have later on cleverly exploited, by saying that the people of Macedonia call themselves Bulgars, and that therefore they really are Bulgars.

This falsification received a mighty support since the creation of the Bulgarian Exarchate in 1870. Having obtained the right to have their own bishops, priests and teachers in all Turkish territories—which right was denied to the Serbs—the Bulgars transformed that concession into a mighty instrument of propaganda.

The Russian, Bulgar and Serb churches use the same old Slavonic language, which, although not identical with the vernacular languages of those peoples, is quite near enough to be understood. Placed before the alternative, either to continue to attend the Greek churches, the Greek language of which they did not understand, or to attend the Bulgar churches, the old Slavonic language of which they could understand, the Serbs of Macedonia naturally decided to attend the Bulgar churches. Entering thus into permanent connection through life with the Bulgar priests, who performed to them all the church rites, baptisms, matrimony, funerals, the Serbs of Macedonia came under the permanent influence of the Bulgar political propagators. Yet they were able to preserve their language, their customs (for instance the "Slava," which Bulgars have not) national songs, costumes, &c.

Having no other schools, except the Bulgar and Greek schools, the Serbs were obliged to send their children to the Bulgar schools, as the Bulgar language by its similarity with the Serb language was more accessible to the children than the Greek language of the Greek schools. This school dilemma of the Serbs the Bulgar teachers were exploiting for the benefit of the Bulgar propaganda. Namely: they declared to the Serbs, that they could take their children into the Bulgar schools only if they—the parents—declare formally that they themselves were Bulgars! Many Serbs, practically having no choice, accepted those conditions. But even this moral coercion to the denationalisation did not satisfy the Bulgar propaganda. It thought it necessary to undertake still more drastic measures for the rapid Bulgarisation of Macedonia.

Namely, during the last thirty years the Bulgars introduced terrorism as their ally in Macedonia. The horrible activities of the Bulgar Commitadji's bands are well known. By murder and fire they were forcing the Serbs of Macedonia to declare themselves to belong to the Bulgar nationality!

But even this roughest and most cruel method did not succeed to eradicate the national consciousness of the Macedonian Serbs. The best proof of that was given by the events of 1912, when the victorious Serb army liberated the Macedonian people from the Turkish yoke of five centuries, and when that people received the Serbs as their own brethren and liberators.

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Having so far by the historical facts proved the complete groundlessness of the Bulgar pretensions on Macedonia, it is necessary that we should, for the sake of better information, consider and solve the question : *Which territories properly form Macedonia?*

The name of Macedonia was limited on the majority of the older maps (since the XVIth century), as well as on some maps with classical nomenclature or with reminiscences on such nomenclature, only on the coast around Salonica, the plain of Salonica, especially Campagna, and on the territory west and north-west of the same, with to-day's Moglena. The principal towns of that true Macedonia were *Edessa* (Voden) and *Pella* (to-day's village Postoe). Later the Macedonian kingdom was extended, and the name was given to the entire territory of that kingdom.

Different was the conception of Macedonia during the time of the Roman Republic and in the beginning of the Empire. The Upper Struma and Vardar have as yet not belonged to it, but in the beginning Macedonia comprised also Greece up to Morea, Thessaly and Epirus, the Southern and Central Albania up to Drim : but since the time of Augustus only the last named countries without Greece were comprised in Macedonia. In the Byzantine times that conception was often changed.

During the Serbian and Bulgarian conquests the name has been almost entirely lost. But towards the end of the XVth and during the XVIth century many Balkan countries, as for instance, Old Serbia, Zetta,

Albania, Bulgaria, Bosnia, Hertsegovina, were marked as Macedonia. The foreign and national authors comprised all those countries under the name of Macedonia, simply, as J. Ruvarats proved it, as a reminiscence on the classical world and classical nomenclature.

Besides this, just mentioned, oldest conception of Macedonia, the most competent scientific authority on the geography of the Balkan Peninsula, Professor Cvijich, of the Belgrade University, has not found any confirmation for other historical conceptions of Macedonia. But on many of the mentioned maps Macedonia appears to comprise this territory, starting from the southern boundary of the Scopska, Crna gora (Kara Dagh) down the Vardar to Salonica. Consequently Macedonia comprises principally the central and lower valley of the Vardar, the country around great lakes in the West and up to Struma, and on some points up to Mesta in the East.

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#### WHAT IS "OLD SERBIA" AND WHAT ARE HER BOUNDARIES?

Now we come to another question, namely : What is "Old Serbia" and what are her boundaries? The answer ought to be supplied by historical and scientific facts.

The conception of Old Serbia and Macedonia can be scientifically fixed only on the basis of those maps which have appeared before the first decades of the XIXth century, before the liberation of Serbia and before the appearance of the separate and antagonistic Serb and Bulgar tendencies.

Professor Cvijich has studied all the maps since the XVIth century, when better and more complete maps of the European countries began to be made, in which instead of the classical names the national names of the countries, provinces and other geographical objects

were introduced. From that time up to the end of the XVII<sup>th</sup> century the most exact maps of the Balkan Peninsula are the Italian ones, more especially the Venetian ones, then the Mercator's maps and those of the "French Royal Geographers."

On all those maps the name Serbia stretches to some territories to the south of the mountain Shar and of the Skopska Crna Gora. On the maps, made by the "Geographers of the Venetian Republic,"\* at the name of the town Skoplyé it is regularly marked "*Metropolis della Servia.*" On great number of maps prepared by Joh. Bapt. Homann—from the first half of the XVII<sup>th</sup> century—Serbia comprises Skoplyé, Kratovo and Kustendil districts. Macedonia on those maps begins considerably to the South from Skoplyé.

On the maps which the heirs of Homann continued to publish in the beginning of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century (1802, 1805, etc.). Serbia comprises not only Novi Bazar and Kossovo territories, but also Scoplyé and Kratovo. So it was in all better old geographies in which Serbia was described by her boundaries.

Further, it is known that that conception of Serbia was not only cartographic and literary, but lived with the people themselves. The inhabitants of Kratovo, Skoplyé, Owche Polyé called their country always *Serbian country*. Therefore it was quite natural, that after the liberation of Serbia, the Skoplyé, Kratovo and other territories of the Kossovo Vilayet have been called Old Serbia for the distinction from the autonomous Modern Serbia.

*The conception "Old Serbia" has therefore not been created for the sake of the national pretensions, and the Southern boundaries of Old Serbia must be extended beyond Shar Planina, in the main on the territories of the former Kossovo Vilayet, on the territories which to-day the Bulgars—as we have seen—without any foundation call Macedonia, only in order to justify their claims on that purely Serb country.*

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\*V. Corneli of 1698 year in Corso Geographico.

Let us now conclude. It is very difficult to draw an absolutely exact boundary between the Serb and Bulgar elements in Macedonia, taking that country in her wider conception. The principal reason for that difficulty consists in that circumstance, that those two peoples—according to their tongue so similar to each other—so imperceptibly pass one into the other in the limitroph territories, that it is impossible to say quite exactly where the Serb ceases and where the Bulgar commences. Still less is that possible to fix for the earlier periods, that we could be enabled according to their ethnographic condition to measure later changes.

*It could be, however, taken as approximately exact, that the ethnographic boundary between the Serbs and Bulgars in Macedonia runs by the valley of the river Struma. To the East of that line the Bulgars are in majority, and to the West the Serbs.*

The North-Eastern part of Macedonia is inhabited by the Bulgar element. Those Bulgars are called *Shoppi* (in plural, *Shop* in singular). They have emigrated into that part of Macedonia from Samokov, Dupnitsa and Kiustendil mountainous districts. They occupy now the basin of Razlog, the valley of Mesta up to Momena Klissura, and also the former Upper Djuma district along the Struma up to the town of Melnik. Towards the South in this part of the Eastern Macedonia Bulgars are mixed with Turks and Pomaks, and on the coast they are mixed with the Greek element.

The Serb element in the Central and Western Macedonia is mixed with other non-Slav nations—Albanians, Turks, Greeks and Arumuns. There are also many, and distributed throughout all the country, the so-called Muhadjirs (the emigrants) from Serbia, Bulgaria, Bosnia, Hertsegovina and Montenegro. Amongst the Serbs in Macedonia live also former Christians converted to Islam. Those of Kichevo call themselves *Ajvotsi*, and those of Tikvesh call themselves *Turks*. All the Macedonian converts to Muhammedan faith speak Serb language, and have preserved many of the Serb customs.

The Turkish population of Macedonia can be divided in three great groups, *one of the Sea-coast, one of the Vardar, and the third one of Sari-Gyol.* Besides those three groups there are Turks also living in all the towns of Macedonia.

The Greek population of Macedonia forms two special settlements, one on the South-East of Macedonia on the *Ægean coast*, and the other in the valley of the river Bistritsa, in the Western Macedonia.

Arumuns are the Roman nation in the Balkan Peninsula. They have two distinct tribes, the Karaguns and Farsherioti. Arumuns are to be found in all parts of Macedonia as tradesmen, innkeepers and shepherds. The Arumuns of Moglena form a third group, occupied by agriculture.

The Albanians live mixed with Serbs in the North-Western part of Macedonia.

Jews are to be found in towns, but most of them in Salonica.

Gipsies are dispersed everywhere in the country.

And at last—there are Circassians in the district of Seres.

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Examining all the written monuments with reference to the Slavs of Macedonia, from the oldest time to the XIXth century, there is not a single monument in which the Macedonians had called themselves Bulgars, or their language the Bulgarian language.

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